

1. [Previously presented] A method of assigning a print job in a printing system, the printing system comprising at least one printer and at least one computer connected to said printer(s), wherein the or each printer has a plurality of different printing configurations and the or each computer is capable of generating at least one print job, said print job(s) having corresponding printing requirements, each printing configuration being capable of satisfying one or more printing requirements, the method comprising the steps of:

- i) creating one or more print jobs;
- ii) notionally assigning the or each print job created in step i) as a notional print job assignment across one or more of the printers in such a way that the one or more of the printers have printing configurations that are capable of satisfying the printing requirements of a corresponding print job;
- iii) calculating a cost for printing the or each print job according to said notional print job assignment;
- iv) repeating steps ii) and iii) at least once for a at least one different notional print job assignment; and
- v) selecting from the notional print job assignments according to the calculated costs a preferred assignment of the or each print job.

2. [Original] A method as claimed in claim 1, in which the or each printer has a pre-existing printing configuration, and said calculation of the cost includes an assessment of the cost of any needed changes from the pre-existing configuration(s) to changed configuration(s) so that the printer(s) can satisfy the printing requirements.

3. [Original] A method as claimed in claim 2, in which said needed changes include manual reconfiguration of at least one printer, said calculated cost then including an assessment of the cost of such a manual reconfiguration.

4. [Original] A method as claimed in claim 3, in which the preferred assignment of the printing job requires a manual reconfiguration of at least one printer, in which the printing system after selection of said preferred assignment then presents to a user of the printing system instructions for manually reconfiguring said printer(s).

5. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 1, in which the print job is assigned to more than one printer, and the printing system presents to a user of the printing system instructions for any or all of locating, assembling, collating, binding, or otherwise combining material printed from the printers.

6. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 1, in which the print job has a plurality of different parts, each part having different printing requirements, and the print job is split according to those different requirements.

7. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 1, in which the calculated cost is an economic cost.

8. [Currently amended] A printing system, the printing system comprising [[at]] a plurality of printers and at

least one computer connected to said printers, each printer of said plurality of printers having a plurality of different printing configurations and the at least one computer being capable of generating at least one print job, said at least one print job having corresponding printing requirements, the at least one printing configuration being capable of satisfying one or more printing requirements, wherein the printing system is arranged to calculate a cost for printing the at least one print job according to different notional assignments of the at least one print job across one or more of the printers in such a way that said printers have printing configurations that are capable of satisfying the printing requirements, and to select according to the calculated costs a preferred assignment of the or each print job; and wherein [[the at]] each printer has a pre-existing printing configuration and said calculation of the cost includes an assessment of the cost of any needed changes from the pre-existing printing configurations to changed printing configurations so that the printers can satisfy the printing requirements.

Claims 9 - 10. Cancelled.

11. [Previously presented] A method of assigning a print job in a printing system, the printing system comprising a plurality of printers and at least one computer connected to said printers, wherein each printer has a plurality of different printing configurations associated therewith and the computer is capable of generating at least one print job, said at least one print job having corresponding

printing requirements, each printing configuration being capable of satisfying the printing requirements corresponding to said at least one print job, the method comprising the steps of:

- i) creating one or more print jobs;
- ii) notionally assigning each print job created in step i) as a notional print job assignment across the printers in such a way that the one or more of the printers have printing configurations that are capable of satisfying the printing requirements of a corresponding print job;
- iii) calculating a cost for printing each print job according to said notional print job assignment;
- iv) repeating steps ii) and iii) at least once for a at least one different notional print job assignment; and
- v) selecting from the notional print job assignments according to the calculated costs a preferred assignment of each print job.

12. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 11, in which each printer has a pre-existing printing configuration and wherein said calculation of the cost includes an assessment of the cost of any needed changes from the pre-existing configuration of said at least one printer to a changed configuration for said at least one printer so that the at least one printer can satisfy the printing requirements associated with a given print job.

13. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 12, in which said needed changes include manual reconfiguration of at least one printer, said calculated

cost then including an assessment of the cost of such a manual reconfiguration.

14. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 13, in which the preferred assignment of the printing job requires a manual reconfiguration of at least one printer, in which the printing system after selection of said preferred assignment then presents to a user of the printing system instructions for manually reconfiguring said printer(s).

15. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 12, in which the given print job is assigned to more than one printer, and the printing system presents to a user of the printing system instructions for any or all of locating, assembling, collating, binding, or otherwise combining material printed from the printers.

16. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 12, in which the given print job has a plurality of different parts, each part having different printing requirements, and the print job is split according to those different requirements.

17. [Previously presented] A method as claimed in claim 11, in which the calculated cost is an economic cost.